

## SERIOUS INJURY ACCIDENT: January 2005 Plant Operator Caught in Machinery

A brine processing plant operator was seriously injured when his left hand came in contact with the moving part of a rotary valve located inside a fluidized bed dryer assembly. The worker was looking into the dryer through the upper inspection doors to determine if it needed cleaning when his cell phone fell from his pocket into the dryer. Unable to see his phone from any of the inspection doors, he reached into the dryer and began feeling around blindly for the phone. While doing this, the fingers of his left hand contacted the moving rotary valve, which had been left in operation. The worker's hand became trapped in the valve, nearly severing four fingers. Co-workers had to manually reverse the rotary valve to free the injured man's hand. The man was admitted to a hospital where three of his four fingers were successfully re-attached.



View of dryer assembly



Approximate location of rotary valve inside dryer

### CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

This accident occurred due to the injured worker's failure to follow proper safety procedures which would have included de-energizing, locking out and tagging the power source for the dryer prior to reaching inside.

- All miners should be reminded of the requirements in DMM safety regulation **4VAC25-40-2140** which include de-energizing electrically powered equipment and locking out and tagging power switches. This is to be done prior to activities where contact with energized machinery is possible.